

Michigan Child Care Matters



DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER & INDUSTRY SERVICES
Bureau of Regulatory Services
Division of Child Day Care Licensing

EXCEPTIONAL PRACTICE II

Issue 56 Spring, 2001

From the Director



Michigan Child Care Matters has been a vehicle used by the Department to provide you with consultation and technical assistance. This and future issues will begin to contain licensing updates and information, as well.

The first topic I would like to address is adverse, or disciplinary actions. I hope that you are able to maintain compliance with all licensing rules and never have to be involved in an adverse action. However, it is important that you know what your rights are, and what the Department's responsibilities are in this process.

A new adverse action procedure was recently implemented that I would like to explain. Using the example of a complaint investigation (many times this process begins with a complaint), this new adverse action scenario is as follows:

A complaint is received and investigated by the licensing consultant. A final report is completed and sent to the licensee or registrant. If there are violations, the licensing consultant may do one of two things: ask for a plan of correction or decide that the violations are so serious that adverse action be taken.

If the licensee or registrant is requested to provide a plan of correction, submission of an acceptable plan of correction will end the investigation. If the plan of correction is not acceptable, or not submitted within the specified timeframe, the adverse action process will begin.

At this point, a Notice of Intent document, signed

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by me, will be sent to the licensee or registrant. The Notice of Intent may be to Deny Issuance, Revoke or Modify a license or registration, or Refuse to Renew a license or registration. This document provides the licensee or registrant with legal notice of the basis for this action. The licensee or registrant will be offered an opportunity to attend a Compliance Conference.

If the licensee or registrant does not respond in writing to the Notice of Intent within 30 days, the proposed action will become final. If the licensee or registrant wants to discuss the case, a Compliance Conference will be held. If there is no settlement or documentation of rule compliance at the conference, a hearing before an administrative law judge will be

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Nurturing: A Caregiver's Critical Role

*Jacqueline Wood, Consultant
Early Childhood and Parenting Programs
Michigan Department of Education*

Nurturing is shown in the way a caregiver holds a child; speaks and listens to the child; responds to a child's needs and looks at a child. It is the interaction that occurs between a child and a caregiver.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NURTURING

Only recently have we learned how very critical caregiver nurturing is to a child's early brain development and to a child's emotional and social competence.

Research has shown that the early brain development of children is greatly enhanced when they are cared for by caregivers who are positive, warm and sensitive to their needs. It has also shown what a devastating effect the lack of positive nurturing has on the higher reasoning and thinking areas of children's brains and on their emotional and social competence.

Children who have been nurtured by warm sensitive caregivers:

- ◆ emotionally trust and enjoy those that care for them.
- ◆ attach emotionally to caregivers.
- ◆ form positive relationships with peers.
- ◆ act independently.
- ◆ are more competent in what they do.
- ◆ can cooperate with others.
- ◆ are able to engage in more complex play requiring higher cognitive brain development.
- ◆ wander less and stay with activities longer
- ◆ reduce stress hormones more quickly, allowing the brain to process new higher levels of learning.

For children in child care, it has also been found that 1/3 of a child's development is based on experiences in child care. For a 12 month old infant, that means four months of his development is directly related to child care. For a four year old it can be one year of development.

These new findings all point to how critical the role of consistent, warm, nurturing caregiver relationships are to a child's early development and later

success in school and life.

SO —HOW MUCH POSITIVE NURTURING OCCURS IN YOUR PROGRAM?

When was the last time you stopped and really assessed the actual amount of time each child in your care is cuddled, gently held, softly spoken to, sung to, individually read to, and gently touched during the day?

In comparison, have you observed how often a child is spoken to primarily to control his behavior; is diapered or fed with no smile or eye contact from a caregiver; or is always herded and interacted with primarily as part of a larger group?

Most of us have never taken the time to observe an individual child in our care as he moves through a day to see how much individual nurturing that child receives.

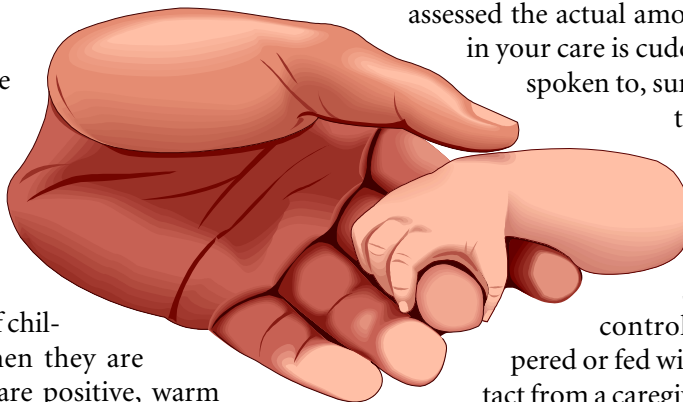
When the degree of nurturing provided to a child in care has been studied, findings show that the amount of nurturing received in group care is less than 20 minutes over a five hour period. In some infant programs, it is less than two minutes a day as caregivers busily complete the routine tasks of warming food, diapering, putting a child down in a crib, and more.

It has also been found that warm positive nurturing occurs more frequently in homes and centers with low child to adult ratios and where child group sizes are small.

Given your program, are your ratios the minimum allowed by licensing? Have you limited your group size and worked with caregivers on the type of interaction they provide children?

WAYS TO INCREASE THE NURTURING CHILD- REN RECEIVE IN YOUR CARE

Here is a list of caregiver behaviors that can foster nurturing and children's development. Think about ways to create opportunities for these behaviors to occur in your program.



1. Interact with children 1 on 1 or in groups of two to three children.
2. Make frequent friendly eye contact - smile with your eyes.
3. Smile and laugh with children.
4. Show affection and friendly behavior.
5. Gently hold, touch and cuddle each child throughout the day.
6. Hold each infant when bottle feeding so the infant can look into your eyes and see your face.
7. Talk and smile to each child as he is fed and diapered.
8. Respond quickly to a child's cues and requests.
9. Warmly greet each child on arrival in a personal way that tells them you care.
10. Talk to children in friendly warm voice tones.
11. Sing to individual children.
12. Listen to each child when he talks to you.
13. Play with children, sitting at their level.
14. Show respect and kindness to each child.

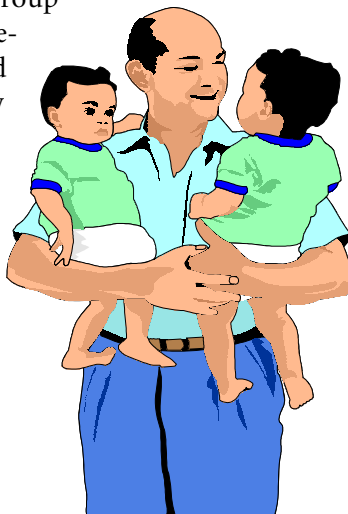
Throughout the day, there are repeated opportunities for a caregiver to nurture individual children or small groups of children. These times are during:

- ◆ diapering and toileting.
- ◆ feeding and meals/snacks.
- ◆ nap and rest time (as children go down for rest, as others sleep and as a child awakes).
- ◆ greetings and departures.
- ◆ periods of comfort and distress.
- ◆ transitions from activity to activity.
- ◆ free choice time.

In a family home, take the time to talk, smile and play with the individual child during these opportune moments.

In a center or group home, model these behaviors for staff. And discuss with staff how they can incorporate these behaviors into each child's daily care.

Take the time.
It will be well worth it! ❖



Upcoming Conferences

Ends of the Rainbow Series

Preventing Communicable Disease in Child Care
Saturday, April 28, 2001 from 8:00am - 3:30pm

Sites:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Alpena | Ann Arbor |
| Benton Harbor | Detroit |
| East Lansing | Grand Rapids |
| Kalamazoo | Marquette |
| Muskegon | Mt. Clemens |
| Sault Ste. Marie | Traverse City |
| University Center - Saginaw | |

Growing Healthy Children

Saturday, April 28, 2001

bps Corporate Training & Conference Center,
Beverly Hills, MI

Workshop topics include developmentally appropriate projects and activities for children, behavior and discipline issues, food allergies and asthma, early brain development, immunizations and communicable disease, and lead poisoning.

Call (248) 424-7132 for more information

Sharing Ideas: *The Mitten Bank*

Children are always losing one mitten or glove. Our day care asks parents to donate the "orphan" mittens and gloves to us. That way we always have a supply for outdoor playtime. They may not match, but they keep the children's hands warm.

Do you have any "Tricks of the Trade," some great ideas that work for you? It can be anything from children's activities, to working with parents, to day to day routine tasks. We want to hear from you. Write us care of:

Judy Levine

Fax: 517-758-1753

Email: Judy.D.Levine@cis.state.mi.us

Schedules That Nurture

Judy Levine, Area Manager
Child Day Care Licensing

Paulette rode the bus to preschool today. She lives the farthest out and it took an hour before arriving at school. Breakfast followed her arrival and then she and her classmates went to group time. Paulette fidgeted during group. She pinched her neighbor and talked while her teacher and classmates were talking. During a 30 minute period, Paulette's name was called 8 times for misbehaviors.

Was Paulette at fault or was it the schedule?

Children need schedules to provide for consistency during their day. In addition, a predictable order allows children to feel secure. Providing for flexibility creates an enriched day.

A well-planned schedule gives structure to the day. It is built around the needs of the children and the philosophy and goals for the program. A well-planned schedule is a hidden foundation that holds the program together.

Conversely, poor schedules are the cause of much unwanted behavior. For example, an unbalanced schedule creates aggressiveness and acting out. A lack of sensitivity to children's energy level causes a lack of attention and disruptive behavior. Long periods of waiting means wasted time, restlessness and boredom.

Rushed periods cause tension and over-tiredness. Interruptions create a loss of focus and disrupt the flow of play.

Just look at the example of Paulette. How long was she being asked to sit? Almost 2 hours! How many adults can sit and pay attention for that period of time?



Providers need to look at the schedules to determine if the child is really the problem.

Program schedules should differ depending on the following:

- ◆ age and stage of development.
- ◆ the arrival time and length of time in care each day.
- ◆ the availability of other areas in the buildings and grounds.
- ◆ the number of available staff.

Components of schedules include: arrival/dismissal, rest/nap, meals/snack, large and small groups,

self-selected child-initiated activity time (SSCIA)/free play, outdoor activities and transitions, including cleanup and personal hygiene.

Infant and toddler schedules should be flexible based on the individual child's needs. The schedule changes as the children grow and develop. Small groups tend to occur naturally — when a caregiver sits down, the children come. Infants and toddlers also seek times for one-on-one interactions. Their self-selected child-initiated period consists of large blocks of time for exploration and choice through a wide variety of activities. These time blocks should occur both in the morning and afternoon; transitions should be limited.



Preschool children require more flexible schedules, including opportunities for a variety of involvement levels. There are built-in experiences that are challenging and fun. The schedules incorporate times for practicing skills, music and movement, daily outdoor and large group activities.

Self-selected child-initiated activity time should be planned in advance. It builds on the developmental needs of the children and stretches them. It connects and extends activities with other learning that has occurred. Free activity choices should be set up ahead of children's arrival to avoid waiting. SSCIA should last 1-1½ hours depending on the ages of the children, and should include all activity centers, including art and small group activities.

School age children require schedules that meet their needs for active and passive activities. The children should establish the schedule and influence the

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type of activities they engage in during the self-selected child-initiated time. The schedule includes snack time and possibly homework as one of the self-selected activities. A variety of activities are offered and are geared to individual play as well as small group activities. Projects may extend over days or weeks and, therefore, space should be available to maintain the projects over time.

Ask any caregiver and she will say that it is during transition times that children's unwanted behaviors occur most frequently. So what can you do to avoid problems?

- ◆ Determine when the transitions occur during the day.
- ◆ Plan for them as you would other activities. What activity precedes/follows the transition? Is the activity for large/small groups or individuals? What materials/space are needed? What directions are needed?
- ◆ Limit the number of transitions and the length of time.
- ◆ Avoid wasted time by:
 - ◆ being prepared.
 - ◆ cleaning up messy activities first.
 - ◆ avoiding group line up.
 - ◆ having an adult receive the children at the activity.

Make transitions a learning experience by including: imagination, movement, discussion, listening, stories, music, and nurturing.

Working with children takes lots of patience, enthusiasm, passion and nurturing. Well thought out schedules will promote an optimum experience for children and adults alike. ❖

Health Insurance For Income Eligible Children and Pregnant Women

To get health care services to as many children as possible, the state has two programs that may help families meet that need. They are the MICHild Program and the Healthy Kids Program.

MICHild is an insurance program for uninsured children of working families. MICHild services are provided by many HMOs and other health plans throughout Michigan.

MICHild covers children under age 19 who are residents of Michigan, have no other insurance and whose family's income falls within program guidelines.

Services include: regular checkups, shots, emergency care, dental care, prescription drugs, hospital care, prenatal care and delivery, vision and hearing, mental health and substance abuse. A full list of services is available when coverage begins. The monthly premium of \$5.00 covers all the eligible children in a family.

Healthy Kids is health care coverage for pregnant women of any age and the first two months after pregnancy, babies up to one year and children under age 19 who are Michigan residents and whose family income falls within program guidelines. Other health insurance coverage for the eligible members needs to be reported. Healthy Kids services are provided by HMOs and other health plans throughout Michigan.

Services include doctor visits, shots, dental care, prescription drugs, hospital care, prenatal care, delivery and support services, vision, hearing and speech therapy, mental health and substance abuse services. Additional services may be covered, including medically necessary transportation. Once enrolled you can get a complete listing of covered services. Healthy Kids is free to the family.

For more information or an interpreter call 1-888-988-6300. TTY for persons with hearing disabilities, call

1-888-263-5897. These calls are free. Or contact the local health department or the FIA office in your community. ❖

Reflections on Designing a Physical Environment for Young Children

Carole M. Grates, Consultant
Primary Directions

As the eyes are the windows to the soul, the way you arrange your early childhood environment is the



mirror of your expectations for children. Consider a classroom where the tables are the predominant feature. It is what you notice first when you enter. The message is that the activities at these tables are the important happenings in the room. The mirror reflects that projects and activities directed by the adults are primary. On the other hand, enter a

room with few tables but many activity centers. Open-ended activities such as blocks and dramatic play are the predominant features. This mirror reflects a teacher who values exploration and interaction.

Early childhood professionals espouse that children learn through actively exploring the materials in their environments and through interacting with other children and adults. Our goals for young children include the development of initiative and self-direction, problem-solving and decision-making skills as well as literacy skills and logical mathematical thinking. Yet we often find it difficult to design an environment that speaks to all the goals, not just the cognitive ones. Here are some thoughts on how to make your environment one that truly reflects what you believe.

Maximum Movement

Many programs leave wide-open spaces within the room. This encourages running and other undesirable play in the classroom. Look at your space and see how you can eliminate any "runways" or "highways" for trucks or feet. Good placement of furniture will allow children easy access to the areas through a traffic pattern that never



leaves a large space for undesirable play.

Boundaries

Young children are visual. A visual barrier in the area gives them a clear message. You can use low shelving that allows the adults to supervise but gives a visual boundary to the children. You can use different types of flooring such as carpet in one area and tile in another. You can achieve it with different colors in floor coverings. And you can also achieve it by using tape or Velcro (especially on carpets) to outline an area.



Size of Area

The size of the area should fit the activity. If it is the block area, you want to provide adequate space for complicated structures. Ideally the block area should be about 1/3 of your room. On the other hand, the dramatic play area should be a cozier place for children. It should accommodate about 4 to 6 children only.

Multiple Use for an Area

Many programs plan a large space for group time. This area is then not used for other activities during the self-selected activity time. The best use of space utilizes the block area, for example, as the group area for stories and activities.



Complimentary Areas

Complimentary areas such as blocks and dramatic play should be located adjacent to each other. You can leave them open to each other or provide a barrier between them if this is not comfortable for you. The value is that this encourages crossover play between the two areas. Other complimentary areas include the open-ended art, the easel and the wood-

working table; reading corner and writing table; science and math manipulative areas.

Exposed and Protected Areas

Exposed areas include the large muscle area and the block area. They need wide-open space for the activity. On

the other hand, the reading, writing, and dramatic play areas should be protected and quieter. It is also important to plan for "vacation spots" within the room. There is a lot of stimulation in a preschool program. Children need to escape the activity sometimes. A quiet, secluded reading area or the under part of a loft can provide this escape hatch.



Orderliness

Provide enough low shelving so that each activity or material has its own storage space. Label all the shelves with pictures from catalogues of the material to be stored there. Also put a picture on the storage container. And while you are at it, be sure teachers and children each have some small storage area to call their own. Shoeboxes or cubbies serve this purpose quite well.

Variety of Centers

The younger the children in the program, the more open-ended centers you should have. At the very least, the following centers should be available on a daily basis:

Open-ended

- Blocks
- Dramatic play
- Easel
- Art with free access to materials, (not a planned project)
- Writing area
- Science area
- Manipulatives
- Large muscle, such as a climber or balance beam
- Sensory area such as sand or water

Self-correcting or teacher supported activities

- Puzzles
- Games
- Teacher planned skill or cognitive activities

Within these areas, you should have some staple materials such as a magnifying glass or scales in the science area, as well as materials you rotate to avoid

boredom. You can rotate manipulatives or props in the dramatic play area.

Defined Work Space

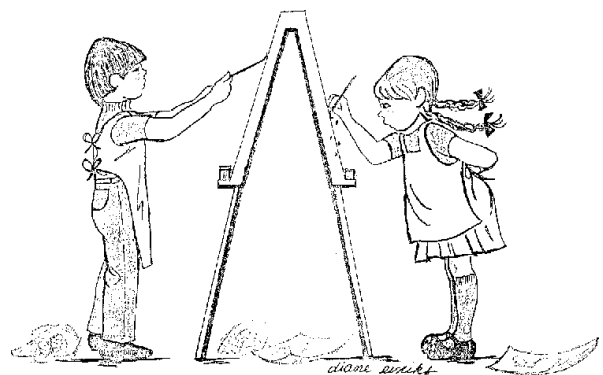
In areas such as the manipulatives or writing area, define the work-space for the children. It can be a table in the area, not one across the room. It can be the floor, which works well for manipulatives and puzzles.

Aesthetics

The final consideration is aesthetics. Consider using muted colors. Use bright colors only as an accent to draw children to an area or to define an area. Look at your lighting. Fluorescent lights are very hard to bear all day for both staff and children. Is there some way you can use some table lighting and cut down on some of the overhead lights? Is there some way you can make better use of natural lighting? Consider natural lighting when you locate the science area or reading area. Try to use a variety of textures in your floor coverings. Use soft pillows in the reading area. And finally, consider the use of plants throughout the room.



It is a challenge to create an environment that meets the needs of the children while promoting the goals of the teachers. But it is a creative challenge that has many rewards and it is the most important work you will do. If the environment is set up correctly, all the rest will come easier. ❖



Play is Learning - Environment Makes the Difference

Gail Darby

Family Home Provider, Wayne County

Day care providers have a responsibility to provide the best environment possible to promote optimum developmental growth among children. Children's natural curiosity and desire to make sense of their world are used to motivate them to become involved in learning activities. Providers should prepare the environment for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults and other children, in well-planned child-appropriate activities.

Each child should be viewed as a unique person. Experiences should be provided that meet each child's needs and stimulate learning in all developmental areas - physical, social, emotional and intellectual. The curriculum and adult's interaction must be responsive to individual differences in ability and interests.

Children should be provided with a safe, stimulating environment:

Infants and Toddlers

- ♦ Toys for young infants that provide sensory stimulation, include colorful plastic balls, push and pull toys, a "climbing/crawling" area with ramp and tunnels, simple shape boxes, a low, unbreakable mirror, and numerous rattles and other manipulatives that babies can feel, look at and mouth.

- ♦ The favorite play of babies of all ages is social play with adults. Even very young infants like the rhythm of nursery rhymes and children's songs.

- ♦ Young infants like looking at colorful picture books. Books for babies are made of heavy cardboard, cloth, or plastic to withstand the mouthing, chewing, and sucking to which babies subject them. Older babies like looking at pictures of familiar objects in books and naming the objects. Toddlers love actual stories about familiar events.

- ♦ Young toddlers like to be with other children but they can't sustain interactions. Caregivers can help them be together happily by providing duplicate toys as well as equipment that can be used by several children at the same time, such as sandboxes, water tables, playhouses, and climbing structures.

This kind of play equipment helps keep struggles over objects to a minimum and encourages parallel and joint play.

- ♦ With their improving fine motor coordination, toddlers start to enjoy simple puzzles, boxes with shapes to sort and fit, stacking toys, small blocks, and crayons and paper. Dolls and stuffed animals give them something soft to hug. Old hats, purses, shoes and clothes suggest roles to toddlers who are just beginning to play pretend games.

Preschoolers

- ♦ Preschoolers should select many of their own activities from among a variety of learning areas the provider prepares, including dramatic play, science, math, games and puzzles, books, recordings, art and music.

- ♦ Having a variety of activities available can incorporate learning about math, science, social studies, health, and other areas. These activities could include building with blocks, measuring sand and water, observing changes in the environment, working with tools, exploring animals and plants, wheels and gears, singing and listening to music from various cultures, and drawing, painting and working with clay.

- ♦ Outdoor activity is planned daily so children can develop large muscle skills, learn about outdoor environments and express themselves freely and loudly. They should have daily opportunities to use large muscles including running, jumping, and balancing.

- ♦ Children should also have daily opportunities to develop small muscle skills through



play activities such as pegboards, puzzles, painting, cutting and other similar activities.

- ♦ Children should be given many opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperating, helping, negotiating, and talking with the person involved solving interpersonal problems.

Basic skills develop when activities are meaning-

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Super Heroes

Lois Cook

Former Child Care Services Teacher

Mt. Pleasant

Who are the super heroes anyway? *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* are probably the newest, the most powerful, the most violent. Earlier heroes have been *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Superman*, *Batman*, and even *Buck Rogers*. The sale of toys and other licensed products related to super heroes add to the ever present rough and aggressive play exhibited by children. However, there is a difference among rough play, aggression and violence.

Children often start pretend play as early as two years old. The peak years for imitation are four, five and six, and may include wishful fantasies. Older children, up to 10 and 11, may mimic athletes, including professional wrestlers or other celebrities, as well as cartoon superheroes.

The difference between real and pretend is not clear to younger children. Thus, aggressive role-playing may escalate into more dangerous behavior. Children restructure their world to their own rules where power and strength prevail. Television, comics, radios and movies are mimicked, sometimes resulting in injuries.

Aggressive play is more prominent with the children who know each other well. These children are often bored, not challenged. Boys are more likely to take part in hero play. Girls who are more assertive may also become a part of the play, although they tend to assume the rescuer role.

Here are some suggestions for teachers to consider:

- ◆ Watch for laughing. The laughing tells you it is all in fun. Aggression starts immediately when laughing stops.
- ◆ Have the children help make the rules of play.
- ◆ Talk about super heroes during group time. Listen to the children's thoughts, feelings and reasons for them. Talk about the daily activities of the heroes - eating breakfast, bed time, school activities, and sports. Ask children to invent their own super heroes.
- ◆ Limit the time and place for super heroes - maybe outside only. Have a particular area for the play. Always give children the right to leave the area and play. No one should be forced to be a part of the super hero play. Most of the outside area can be a safety zone.
- ◆ Interrupt and redirect hurtful play. Use a bell



or gong to signal the end of this play.

- ◆ Praise kindness and helpfulness.
- ◆ Stage other dramatic play, such as a pirate ship.
- ◆ If Batman is the play, add a study of bats. If Spider Man is the play, add a study of spiders.
- ◆ Adults who are with children regularly need to watch or read the same stories to have an understanding of the play.

In talking with parents, discuss the following about super hero play:

- ◆ Ask that no super hero clothing be worn to your program. It is easier to turn off the play if there is nothing to remind them all day. School clothing should not interrupt the learning. Recommend to parents that if they really want their children to have special clothing they buy pajamas. At least pajamas aren't seen after the lights are turned off.
- ◆ Toys related to super heroes can be treated as any other toy from home - kept in the children's cubby or other personal area but not played with at your center.

Research indicates that children between the ages of two and five watch about four hours of TV a day. Ask that parents reduce the viewing of violent TV programs. Better yet, if children are allowed to watch super hero programming, encourage parents to watch with the child so they can talk about the stories.

Forbidding all super hero play seldom works. Probably the best method is to not prohibit super hero play altogether. Banning sends the message that they must hide their interests from adults. Providing a variety of dramatic play themes will inspire children to move beyond the super heroes of their world. ❖

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Play - It Has a Purpose

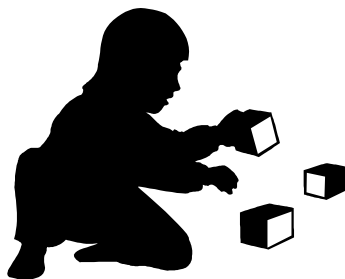
*Sandra Rademacher, Licensing Consultant
Genesee County*

A toddler gently cradles a doll in her arms, "Baby go sleep." A two year old races a car across the floor, "Bye, going to work." A preschooler announces proudly, "I can make a high tower with these blocks."

All these children are engaging in a very common practice at their own developmental and conceptual levels...play. Play is a childhood activity that is the most efficient, powerful, and productive way to learn the information young children need to know about their world.

But alas, there are conflicting views on the value of children's play. Early childhood educators and practitioners and some parents believe play is the best way for children to learn the tasks, skills and concepts needed to establish a solid foundation for later school and life success.

There are others who believe that play is a "waste of time," off-task behavior, messy, noisy, and uneducational. Those who expect programs to teach to specific academic standards and outcomes. These learning environments leave no room for child-centered learning and the methods by which children learn best, through play.



Although most observers can identify children engaged in play. What eludes them is how do we define it? Play can be defined for those who need an academic definition as: the activities children participate in which develops a variety of abilities, including creativity, language acquisition, social relationships, group cooperation, motor ability, thinking ability and problem-solving skills.

Play is children's work. It involves the free selection of enjoyable, self-motivating and satisfying experiences that children choose because they're good at it and they like it.

Children as young as twelve months of age begin to show signs that they are beginning to understand how their world operates. They begin to pretend, to imitate and copy what they see parents, care-givers, and siblings do as they go about the tasks of everyday

life.

They begin to use everyday objects and toys to re-create those experiences. For example, a toddler begins to portray eating by touching a baby bottle to a doll's lips, sleeping by putting a doll in a crib, and the skill of conversation by putting a telephone up to her ear.



These early pretend gestures are important acts with purposeful meaning to children. By responding to these gestures in an appropriate manner, adults can lead children to the next level in the development of their play.

Children tend to play in ways that are consistent with their cognitive development. Play is determined by the players, including the time-frame, the use of available materials, the rules of the activity, and the role of each participant.

Different kinds of play exists and each offers children unique learning opportunities. Some of the typical kinds of play and why they are important are listed below.

Motor/Physical Play

Large muscle and movement play provides opportunities for children to develop gross and fine motor skills. These activities promote growth, agility and muscle strength. Recent research has confirmed the critical link between stimulating activity and brain development. Young children need to have ample opportunities to develop physically and to encourage a life-long interest in fitness.

Social Play

By interacting with others in a play setting, children can experience and learn the social roles necessary for them to function effectively in their immediate world and the adult world of the future. Children learn the social rules of sharing, cooperation, turn-taking, and communication with others.

Constructive Play

During constructive play children learn to manipulate their environment to create things. It allows children to be creative, experiment with different objects, and learn the basic knowledge of building, stack-

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ing, spatial relationships and drawing.

Fantasy Play

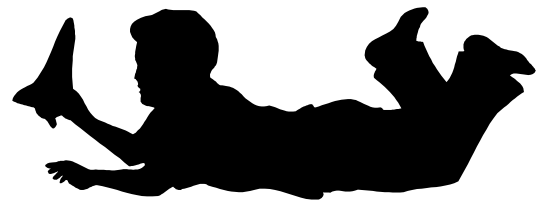
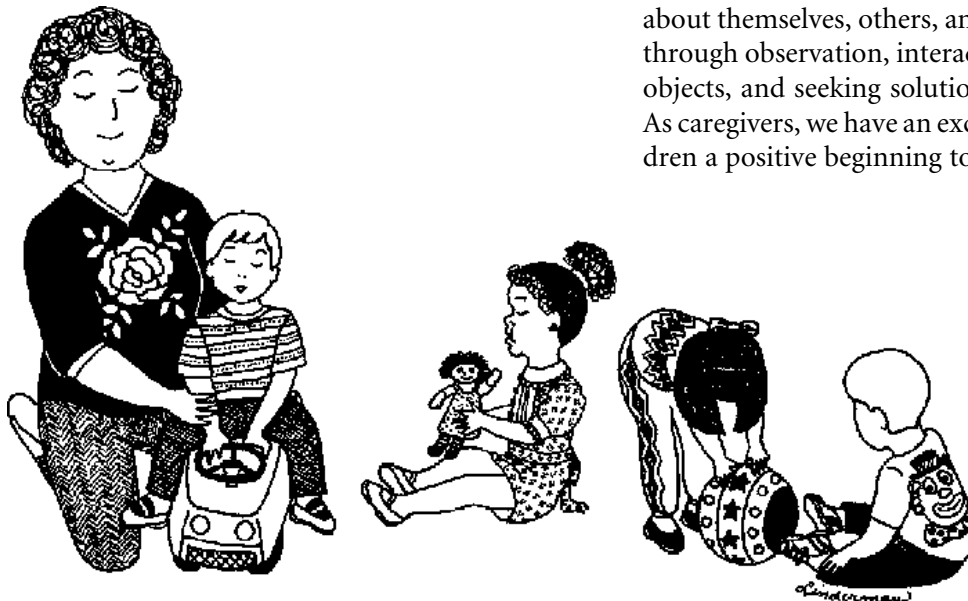
Children can try out new roles and situations. During fantasy play children experiment with language and emotions. They learn to develop problem-solving skills and flexible thinking patterns. Children who are shy and have difficulty expressing themselves can benefit in this risk-free play environment where “pretend” isn’t always reality.

Games With Rules

As children grow and develop, so does their need for more advanced and sophisticated forms of play. The world of games appears with its social rules and contracts. Group games become important vehicles for children to learn that in certain situations everyone must adhere to the same set of rules. Life-long skills are practiced which enable children to succeed and function in the game of life.

Caring adults have a critical role in supporting all areas of children’s play. These roles include:

- ♦ Providing materials that encourage high quality play.
- ♦ Structuring the environment to be age appropriate, but challenging.
- ♦ Modeling play behaviors for children.
- ♦ Introducing children to new play opportunities.
- ♦ Extending and expanding play experiences



based on what children have previously learned.

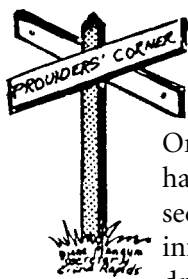
- ♦ Allowing children to repeat and practice their play skills for mastery.

Creating purposeful play settings is the “very best” way to provide children with the social/emotional, cognitive and physical development experiences they need to grow. Play based activities allow children to gain that vast amount of basic knowledge needed for future school and life success. ❖

Play is Learning, (cont. from page 8)

ful to children. Learning opportunities should be provided to develop language through such experiences as listening to and reading stories and poems and participating in dramatic play and other activities requiring communication.

Children develop an understanding of concepts about themselves, others, and the world around them through observation, interacting with people and real objects, and seeking solutions to concrete problems. As caregivers, we have an excellent chance to give children a positive beginning to a lifetime of learning. ❖



A True Story

Cynthia Deshone, Ticklebug Day Care
Saginaw County

One day a woman called me to ask if I had any openings for care during the second shift. I told her that I did. She informed me that she had three children, ages 4 years, 3 years, and 11 months. She said she had recently moved from "up north" and was staying with a relative. She stated that she qualified for state aid for daycare and needed daycare as soon as possible. She said she already had all the papers filled out, but I needed to fill out the CDC Provider Care Information Application. I met with her, filled out the CDC application and she sent them in to the FIA. For some reason unknown to me I had a lot of trouble getting the paperwork straightened out. Fortunately, I had another child in my care whose mother works for FIA. She helped me through the problems with the paperwork, after which I started to receive the payments from FIA on a regular schedule.

I received payments for a year, until the mother's case went up for review. The case was closed because she had not turned in her required paperwork. She told me she had turned in her paperwork and it was the FIA's fault that I had not been paid for the children's care. I told her she needed to call her caseworker to find out what the problem was. Every day when she dropped the children off I asked her if she had heard from her caseworker and she told me she had left a message and the caseworker had not called her back.

After a month I called her caseworker and talked to her myself. The caseworker told me that my child care client needed to reapply, as her case was closed because she never turned in her yearly review paperwork. I informed my daycare client that they had not received her yearly review paperwork and she needed to reapply again. She said she reapplied. Therefore, I waited again.

By this time, my daycare client was in arrears to the tune of approximately \$1353.00. I brought this to my client's attention; she started crying and said she did not have that kind of money, and what was going to happen to her children; her children had been in my care for 14 months. I had grown quite fond of them and they liked being in my care because we did bath and bedtime stories.

I felt sorry for my day care client, as I am the kind of person who would do just about anything

for anyone because I see the good in all people no matter what their circumstances. I told my daycare client just to get this matter (the past due child care amount) taken care of so I could be paid for my services. She said she would go down to the FIA and talk to them. Again I asked, and asked, and asked regularly about her re-application and the reply was always her caseworker never called her back.

By this time, another month had gone by. I took it upon myself to call her caseworker and she was on vacation for two weeks. When the two weeks were up, I called the caseworker again. The caseworker told me the mother's case had been denied because she had not turned in her required paperwork. I told my client that in order for her children to stay in my care *she* had to pay me for their care. At the end of August my summer helpers were back in school, and I needed someone to work the 7:30 am to 2:30 pm, Monday through Friday shift. I told my client she could work off the arrearage and she would still have to pay me for the children's day care out of her own pocket on a weekly basis. She verbally agreed to this arrangement. She worked the first full week that the children were back in school and paid me that week for the care of her children. At this point, she owed me \$4,023.00.

On Labor Day her children were scheduled for daycare. She called me 1/2 hour before the children were to be dropped off and said her boyfriend was going to watch them. I had plans for that day and was going to take the children with me, so it was not a major inconvenience. At least I didn't think so at the time. The next day she had to report to her job at 4:00 pm. She called me at 3:30 pm to inform me she was going to have her boyfriend watch the children again. I said, "OK, whatever," said goodbye, hung up the telephone and thought about what was happening. This client had told me in the past that her boyfriend had to work until 9:00 pm, so I was not sure what was going on. I called the client back, and explained to her that this was not the arrangement we had agreed upon, and she needed to stick to the agreement or find other daycare for her children. She replied, "Well, I guess I will take them someplace else," and she hung up on me.

At that point this client owed me over \$4,000 and I had to take her to court to get the money for services rendered. This is the second time I have had to go to court to get the money that is rightfully mine. Luckily, through the help of my accountant, I was able to col-

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lect from the first case, although it was not nearly this amount of money.

I strive to be on excellent terms with the parents of all the children in my care. These children are with me as much if not more than they are with their hard working parents. I hate to see the children suffer because the parents are irresponsible. This is why we get into this business, because we love children and think we can make a difference. Isn't it?!!

My advice to other day care providers is - think with your head not your heart. Make it plain in your contract that payment must be on a weekly basis in order to keep children in your care. You are running a business, not a charity. Keep business separate from other things and get yourself a good accountant who is skilled in the day care business. I have one who makes my life much easier.

Be forewarned and forearmed! ❖

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News From FIA

All individuals working with children in Michigan child care settings must meet standards established by the Michigan Department of Consumer & Industry Services or the Michigan Family Independence Agency (MFIA). One such standard applies to child abuse and neglect. An individual who is identified as a perpetrator in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect may not care for children in a child care setting. This includes day care aides, relative day care providers, family and group day care providers, any adult living in a family, group, or relative day care home, and center staff.

A Children's Protective Services clearance involves a check of the Michigan Family Independence Agency Central Registry of Child Abuse/Neglect. This is a statewide, electronic registry and contains informa-

tion on all cases of child abuse and/or neglect in which a preponderance of evidence was found.

A person identified as a perpetrator on the Central Registry may request the FIA to amend an inaccurate report or record, or expunge the record from the Central Registry.

As soon as a day care aide, relative, or adult household member is identified on the Central Registry, day care payments stop. If the record is expunged or amended, payments will resume. For family and group day care homes and day care centers, being identified on the Central Registry will affect the status of the license or registration.

The new child care center rules do not permit an individual who is on the Central Registry to have contact with children. Central Registry checks can be secured from any MFIA office.

Month of the Young Child

Each April Michigan celebrates Month of the Young Child. This is a time when communities and individuals recognize the needs and rights of young children and their families. Beginning in 1971, one week in April has been celebrated nationally as Week of the Young Child. In 1985, Michigan expanded the celebration to the entire month of April, with each week having a specific focus. The effort is coordinated by the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children (MiAEYC), with the support of over 30 organizations, businesses and public agencies.

The 2001 MOYC focus weeks are:

April 1-7 Celebrating Community Partnerships
 April 8-14 Promoting Healthy Children & Families
 April 15-21 Recognizing Early Childhood Professionals
 April 22-30 Advocating on Behalf of Children & Families

Month of the Young Child statewide activities include:

- ◆ Purple Ribbon Campaign
- ◆ Doll Campaign
- ◆ Child Care Job Shadow Day(s)
- ◆ Early Childhood Professional Recognition Week
- ◆ Kite Days



For more information contact the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children office at 1- 800-336-6424.

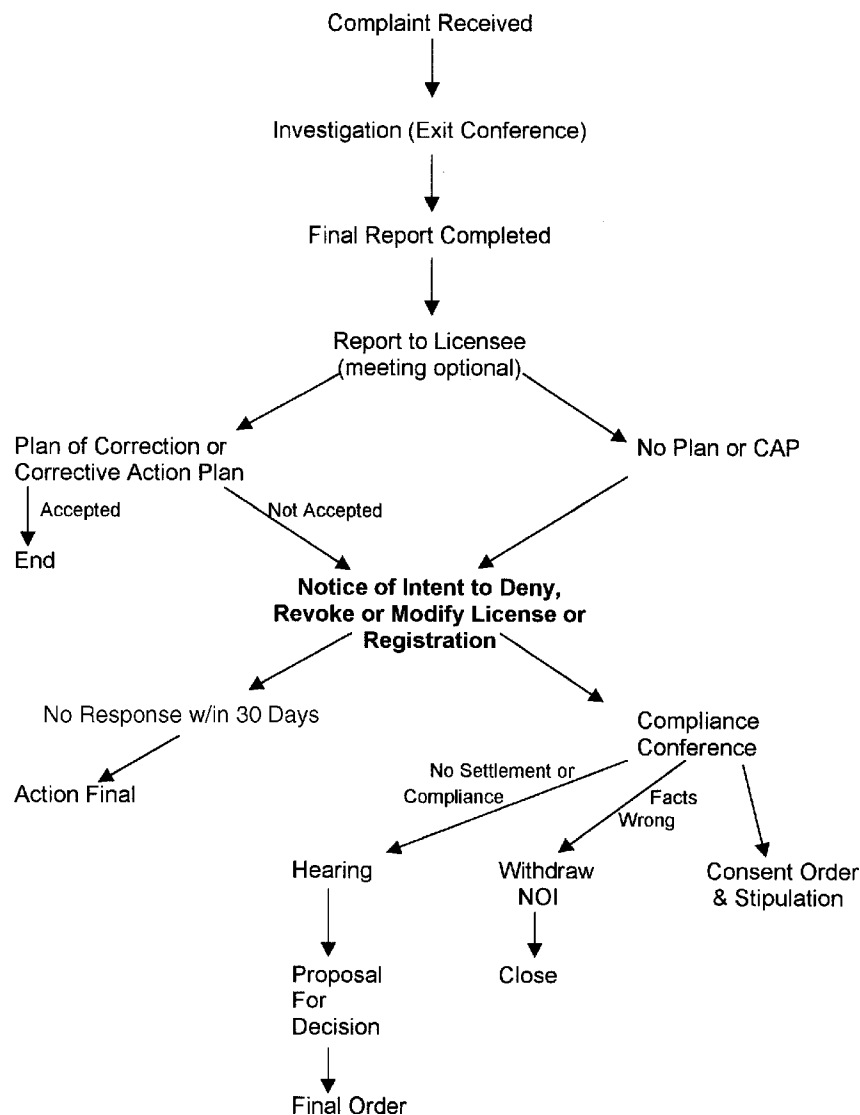
From the Director (cont. from page 1)
scheduled.

Once heard, the administrative law judge will provide a proposed hearing decision, called a Proposal for Decision or PFD. The PFD is forwarded to the Director of the Department of Consumer & Industry Services, Kathy Wilbur, who will sign a final written order. The Final Order may agree with the Proposal for Decision, although in some situations, the Director may not agree with the administrative law judge. A copy of the Final Order will be sent to the licensee or registrant and the Bureau of Regulatory Services. The order takes effect on the day it is signed.

The final option available is a Consent Order and Stipulation. In this case, the licensee or registrant does not disagree with the findings of the investigation. By signing a Consent Order and Stipulation, the matter will not go to a hearing, but the recommendation still takes effect.

One option that is no longer available to licensees or registrants is closing in lieu of adverse action. In the past, a voluntary closure of a license or registration would end the adverse action process, and there would be no official record of an adverse action. Now, once the process has started, it will continue until resolved.

The chart below provides a summary of the entire process.



This publication provides topical information regarding young children who are cared for in licensed child care settings. We encourage child care providers to make this publication available to parents of children in care, or to provide them with the web address so they may receive their own copy. Issue 43 and beyond are available on the internet. **This document is in the public domain and we encourage reprinting.**

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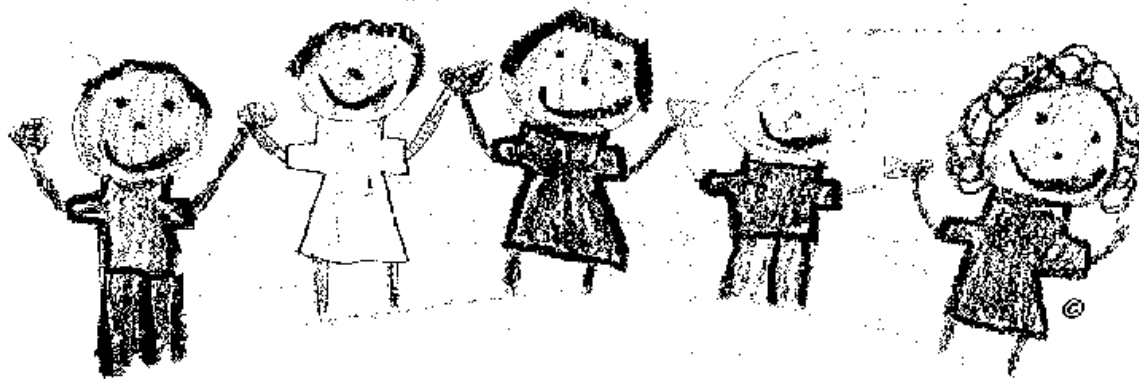
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